

What is claimed is:

1 1. Apparatus for retracting wall surfaces within a vagina during examination
2 with a speculum having opposed blades opened for retracting tissue from
3 anterior and posterior wall surfaces of the vagina and a frame having an opening
4 through which internal structures are visualized, wherein the apparatus
5 comprises a first lateral structure including:

6 a first handle portion including a downwardly open slot for removably
7 attaching the first lateral structure to a first side of the frame of the speculum; and

8 a first lateral blade extending downward from the first handle portion,
9 laterally adjacent a space between the opened opposed blades of the speculum
10 with the first side of the frame engaged within the downwardly open slot of the
11 first handle portion.

1 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the downwardly open slot is a J-shaped
2 slot extending along a lateral portion of the frame and inwardly along a curved
3 portion of the frame with the first side of the frame engaged within the
4 downwardly open slot.

1 3. The apparatus of claim 1, additionally including a clamping screw for
2 holding the handle portion on the frame with the frame extending through the
3 downwardly open slot.

1 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first lateral blade extends downward
2 inwardly adjacent the downwardly open slot.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first lateral blade extends downward
2 outwardly adjacent the downwardly open slot.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus additionally comprises a
2 second lateral structure including:

3 a second handle portion including a downwardly open slot for removably
4 attaching the second lateral structure to a second side of the frame of the
5 speculum, the second side of the speculum being opposite the first side of the
6 speculum; and

7 a second blade extending downward from the second handle portion,
8 laterally adjacent the space between the opened opposed blades of the
9 speculum with the second side of the frame engaged within the downwardly open
10 slot of the second handle portion.

1 7. A vaginal speculum comprising:

2 a pair of opposed blades movable between a closed position and an open
3 position, wherein the opposed blades lie together in the closed position for
4 insertion into a vagina, and wherein the opposed blades are separated from one
5 another for retracting vaginal tissue in the open position;

6 a frame disposed adjacent a proximal end of the pair of opposed blades,
7 wherein the frame includes an opening for visualizing internal structures within
8 the vagina through a space extending between the opposed blades in the open
9 position;

10 a first lateral structure including a first handle portion at a proximal end of
11 the first lateral structure and a first lateral blade, wherein the first handle portion
12 includes a downwardly open slot for removably attaching the first lateral structure
13 to a first side of the frame, and wherein the first lateral blade extends downward
14 from the first handle portion, adjacent a first side of the space extending between
15 the opposed blades in the open position when the first lateral structure is
16 attached to the first side of the frame.

1 8. The vaginal speculum of claim 7, additionally comprising a second lateral
2 structure including a second handle portion at a proximal end of the second
3 lateral structure and a second lateral blade, wherein the second handle portion
4 includes a downwardly open slot for removably attaching the second lateral
5 structure to a second side of the frame, opposite the first side of the frame, and
6 wherein the second lateral blade extends downward from the second handle
7 portion, laterally adjacent a second side of the space extending between the
8 opposed blades in the open position, opposite the first side of the space
9 extending between opposed blades in the open position, when the second lateral
10 structure is attached to the second side of the frame.

1 9. The vaginal speculum of claim 8, wherein
2 the frame includes a curved end portion and a straight lateral portion
3 extending along each side, and
4 each of the downwardly open slots is a J-shaped slot extending along one
5 of the lateral portions of the frame and inwardly along of the curved end portion
6 of the frame with the first and second lateral structures attached to the frame.

1 10. The vaginal speculum of claim 8, wherein each of the lateral structures
2 additionally includes a clamping screw engaging the frame with the lateral
3 structures attached to the frame.

1 11. The vaginal speculum of claim 8, wherein the lateral blades extend
2 downward through the opening within the frame with the lateral structures
3 attached to the frame.

1 12. The vaginal speculum of claim 8, wherein the lateral blades extend
2 downward outwardly from the frame with the lateral structures attached to the
3 frame.

1 13. A method for performing a vaginal examination, comprising:
2 inserting an opposed pair of blades of a speculum into a vaginal opening
3 with the opposed blades lying against one another;
4 opening the opposed pair of blades to expose internal structures within the
5 vaginal opening through a space between the opposed pair of blades;
6 after opening the opposed pair of blades, inserting a first lateral blade
7 within the vaginal opening to extend along a first side of the space between the
8 opposed pair of blades;
9 attaching a handle portion disposed at a proximal end of the first lateral
10 blade to a first side of an open frame of the speculum, extending adjacent a
11 proximal end of the space between the opposed pair of blades;
12 removing the handle portion of the first lateral structure from the frame of
13 the speculum;
14 withdrawing the first lateral blade from the vaginal opening;
15 closing the opposed pair of blades within the vaginal opening to lie against
16 one another; and
17 removing the opposed pair of blades from the vaginal opening.

1 14. The method of claim 13, additionally comprising:
2 after opening the opposed pair of blades, inserting a second lateral blade
3 within the vaginal opening to extend along a second side of the space between
4 the opposed pair of blades, opposite the first side of the space between the
5 opposed pair of blades;
6 attaching a handle portion disposed at a proximal end of the second
7 lateral blade to a second side of an open frame of the speculum, extending
8 adjacent a proximal end of the space between the opposed pair of blades;
9 removing the handle portion of the second lateral structure from the frame
10 of the speculum; and
11 withdrawing the second lateral blade from the vaginal opening.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein
2 the lateral blades are inserted through an opening within the open frame,
3 and
4 the lateral blades are removed from the vaginal opening before the
5 opposed pair of blades are closed.

1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein
2 the lateral blades are inserted outwardly adjacent opposite sides of the
3 open frame, and
4 the opposed pair of blades are closed before the lateral blades are
5 removed from the vaginal opening.

1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein
2 each of the handle portions disposed at a proximal end of a lateral blade
3 includes a slot open adjacent the lateral blade, and
4 each of the handle portions is attached to the open frame with a portion of
5 the open frame extending within the slot.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein
2 the open frame includes a curved end portion and a straight lateral portion
3 extending along each side, and
4 each of the slots is J-shaped to extend along one of the lateral portions
5 and inwardly along the curved end portion of the open frame.

1 19. The method of claim 14, wherein
2 each of the handle portions is attached to the open frame by tightening a
3 clamping screw against the open frame; and
4 each of the clamping screws is loosened before removing the handle
5 portion from the open frame.